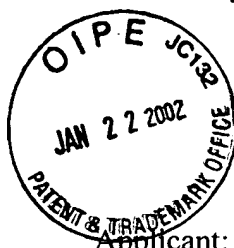


PATENTIN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

| | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Applicant: | Ryan et al. | Examiner: | Rodriguez, J. |
| Serial No.: | 09/383,508 | Group Art Unit: | 3653 |
| Filed: | August 26, 1999 | Docket No.: | AMDA.389DIV1 |
| Title: | RETICLE SORTER | | |

CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence and the papers, as described hereinabove, are being deposited in the United States Postal Service, as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on December 11, 2001.

By: Erin M. Nichols
Erin M. Nichols

OFFICE ACTION RESPONSE AND AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action dated September 11, 2001, please consider the following amendment and remarks.

In the Claims

Please cancel claim 5 and replace the following claims as indicated. The changes to the claims are reflected in the attachment to this Office Action.

1. (Amended) A reticle sorter coupled between a reticle storing system and one or more photolithography exposure tools, comprising:

one or more bays adapted for holding a cassette having slots for reticles;
a sorting system adapted for retrieving the reticles from and inserting the reticles into the slots in order to sort the reticles within the cassette; and
an inspection system, coupled between the one or more bays and an input port of the reticle sorter, for inspecting a characteristic of each reticle.

RECEIVED
FEB 06 2001
GROUP